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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG

NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SPLA CHIEF OF STAFF ON HIGHJACKED WEAPONS,  
RELATIONS WITH SAF

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On October 16, SPLA Chief of Staff Deng described that day, a meeting of the Joint Defense Board and the SPLA/M, a contentious relationship with the SAF and the NCP. He also provided an update on SPLA thinking on the Ukrainian ship seized by Somali pirates with weapons intended for the SPLA. END SUMMARY.

Reports of SPLA Arms Purchases Alarm European Partners

¶2. (C) On October 16, Charge Fernandez met with SPLA Chief of Staff Gen. Oyai Deng and SPLA Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations Gen. James Hoth who were in Khartoum for a meeting of Joint Defense Board (JDB). The Charge cautioned the two SPLA Generals that some European donors are alarmed by public reports that a shipload of weapons, including tanks, seized by Somali pirates were destined for the SPLA. The Charge told Deng that, for its part, the USG would prefer that there are fewer weapons in Sudan rather than more, but that it understands that as long as the SAF continues to purchase weapons, the SPLA feels compelled to do the same. The United States will not publicly criticize the SPLA for equipping itself while we are concerned about tensions between the two peace partners and the possibility of military flare ups as happened in Abyei in May 2008. Some Europeans, however, are taking a very narrow reading of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and are &hypersensitive.<sup>8</sup> The Charge assured Deng that the Europeans are on the side of the SPLA/M, but that they need to be assuaged. He urged the SPLM to seek a meeting with EU to calm the situation. Deng said that he knew "exactly what you are referring to, they get upset if we purchase so much as a bicycl that could have military use."

&SPLA Cannot Be Toothless<sup>8</sup>

¶3. (C) Gen. Hoth commented that the SPLA has learned from its long experience in dealing with the NCP that it will not honor its agreements. While the NCP violates the CPA, it expects others to follow it to the letter. He said that the South values peace more than anyone else in Sudan, but the future is uncertain. &The SPLA cannot be toothless.<sup>8</sup> The CDA agreed that the only reason why the NCP has not cheated even more than it has is because of the strength of the SPLA. Hoth noted that he had told SAF recently that the SPLA is "not subordinate to you, we are equals. If Sudan stays together after 2011, we will be your equals in a new Sudanese Army not subservient to you."

¶4. (C) The CDA warned that if there are more such shipments, the SPLA must be very careful to avoid a repeat of this

incident and the attention it has drawn. This will have to be discussed quietly and confidentially with the SPLA's friends ahead of time. The Charge had just returned from consultations in Washington, where Somali piracy has become a serious concern. The pirates are growing increasingly sophisticated, striking hundreds of miles out at sea from "mother ships" and developing their own intelligence networks.

#### Joint Defense Board Meeting

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¶ 15. (C) Gen. Deng indicated that the SAF had raised the issue of SPLA weapons purchases at the Joint Defense Board meeting earlier that same day, claiming they violated the CPA. Deng noted that the CPA gives the South the right to mobilize its resources, but flatly denied that the arms shipments were for the SPLA, "both Kenya and Ukraine have also denied it," he explained to his SAF counterpart. The SAF then switched to arguing that the SPLA should purchase arms through the SAF, through Port Sudan, rather than on its own. Gen. Hoth commented that just a month earlier in Kosti, the GoS had seized ten Toyota Landcruisers purchased by the SPLA which were in transit to the South. If they do that with land cruisers, "how would they react with tanks?" he noted.

¶ 16. (C) SAF also raised SPLA arms purchases from Ethiopia, including a column of T-55 tanks which had entered the Blue Nile state town of Kurmuk. Hoth clarified that these were SAF tanks captured in battle, "I personally captured them as I was the commander there during the war," which had indeed been sent to Ethiopia for maintenance. Hoth noted that SAF

KHARTOUM 00001544 002 OF 002

would be allowed to check the serial number of the tanks if they wanted to check that they were indeed captured Sudanese Army materiel. Deng said that the only mistake made was that "our local commander moved the tanks in broad daylight" which really shocked the local SAF observers, "we should have done it at night."

#### Integrating and Funding the JIUs

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¶ 17. (SBU) Deng said that the JDB had made progress on issues involving the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs). Acting on the positive example of the newly re-established Abyei JIU, the JDB decided that SAF and SPLA personnel in all JIUs should be fully integrated by the end of the year. (Note: Until now, JIUs have been integrated only at the battalion command level. SPLA and SAF companies within the battalions have remained separate. End Note.) Deng said that the success of the Abyei JIU should serve as a model for the rest of the units. The JDB also agreed that the JIU deputy commander (a SAF officer) should move from Khartoum to Juba to prevent misunderstandings on troop movements to the South by SAF.

¶ 18. (SBU) Deng said that the JDB also finally had agreed to fully fund the JIUs, budget. (Note: The Government of National Unity (GNU) only has been meeting about 40 percent of the JIU's budgetary. End note.) Deng noted that the JIUs lack almost everything needed to function: training, equipment, and housing, etc. Deng said that the proposed budget now will be forwarded for the Presidency's approval. The Charge warned that the NCP has made similar promises before, but never implement them. Deng agreed, and said that the Presidency needs to issue an order to Finance Minister al Jaz to release the funds. GNU First VP (and GoSS President) Salva Kiir has been briefed on the decision and he will raise it with President Bashir. Deng concluded that the JDB's budget-funding decision &probably will go nowhere,<sup>8</sup> but that the SPLA will continue to push. He admitted that the JDB meeting had been remarkably stress-free, considering it dealt with the arms shipment issue.

#### Comment

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¶ 19. (C) The SPLA's purchases of weapons abroad are a

symptom, rather than a cause, of the problem. The NCP uses the same tactics in the JDB it uses elsewhere, demanding that the SPLM hew to the narrowest interpretation of the CPA, while flaunting it themselves as they see fit. We encouraged Gen. Deng to continue to push back against such tactics, since the more the SPLM gets in using them, the more it will be in a position to demand from the NCP while at the same time urging maximum forbearance and adherence by both sides to the spirit and the letter of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

FERNANDEZ